MINUTES

OF THE

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

(PRO RE NATA)

OF

THE SYNOD

OF THE

United Presbyterian Church

IN CANADA,

HELD IN TORONTO, APRIL 9th and 10th, 1861.

TORONTO:
PRINTED BY W. C. CHEWETT & CO., 17 & 19 KING STREET EAST.
1861.

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UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

I.—SEDERUNT.

TORONTO, *Tuesday, April* 9, 1861.
7 o'clock, P.M.

The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada, called *pro re nata*, met, and, after singing psalm 89, 1–4, and reading the 3rd chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, was constituted by the Moderator, the Rev. Alex. A. Drummond.

The roll was called and marked. There were present: James Skinner, William Inglis, John J. A. Proudfoot, William Caven, Robert Hamilton, William Fletcher, Robert Hall, Dr. Ormiston,

John Lees, Robert Hume, M.A., Prof. Taylor, Alex. Kennedy, William Fraser, David Coutts, Dr. Jennings, Peter Glassford, James Dick, John Baird, M.A., James Pringle, Dr. Thornton, George Lawrence, John M. King, A.M., George Riddell, James R. Scott, John Duff, William Barrie, Robert Torrance, David Caw, John Dunbar, Alexander A. Drummond, Matthew Barr, Ministers; Alex. Smith, William Henderson, John Emslie, John Robertson, James Young, Robert Christie, John Parker, John Henry, James Allison, James Haggart, John Agnew, John Keith, John Lennie, James Dalgleish, John Stewart, Elders.

Reasons for calling Meeting.

The Moderator read a letter addressed to him by Prof. Taylor, dated Toronto, 19th February, 1861, to the effect that he adhered to the resignation of the office of Professor of Divinity, which he had tendered to the Synod on the 4th October last, and that he bound himself to continue adhering to the same; and stated that in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Synod, in October, in reference to the Professor's resignation, he had called this meeting to consider the *emergency* which had thus arisen.

The Moderator also stated that the other matter mentioned in the notice of meeting, namely, communicating with the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, in reference to our proposed union with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, appeared to him to be a dutiful and courteous proceeding on the part of this Synod, and therefore gave instructions to this effect in calling this special meeting.

The circular calling the meeting was also submitted, of the following purport:

Bond Head, March 11, 1860.

Rev. Sir,—I am instructed to inform you that a *pro re nata* meeting of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada, will be held in the Bay-street United Presbyterian church, Toronto, on Tuesday, the 9th day of April, next ensuing, for the purpose of considering the *emergency* occasioned by intimation having been given to the Moderator, by Professor Taylor, that he adheres to the resignation of the office of Professor of Divinity, which he tendered to

the Synod on the 4th October last (see Minutes of Synod, Oct. 1860, pp. 423, 425, 426); and also, for the purpose of considering the propriety of corresponding with the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, acquainting them with the contemplated union.

You will please to give timely notice of this meeting to the Elder representing, in Synod, the congregation under your charge.

I have the honor to be, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient servant,

William Fraser,
Synod Clerk.

By order of the Moderator.

The Rev. —— ——

Moderator's conduct sustained.

On motion of Mr. Barrie, seconded by Dr. Thornton, the conduct of the Moderator in calling this meeting was unanimously sustained.

First question for consideration.

The Moderator then stated that the first question for the Synod to consider was, whether or not they accepted the resignation of Prof. Taylor. The resignation, as tendered at last meeting of Synod, was read.

Prof. Taylor's resignation accepted.

On motion of Mr. Torrance, seconded by Dr. Ormiston, it was unanimously resolved, That the resignation, by the Rev. John Taylor, D.D. M.D., of the Professorship of Theology, in this Church, be accepted; but that in accepting it the Synod would express their deep and sincere regret at being deprived of the services of one so well qualified, by his talents and attainments, for the office which he has held; the duties of which he has for nine years discharged with so much credit to himself, so much benefit to the students who have enjoyed the opportunity of pursuing their studies under his direction, and so much acceptability and advantage to the Church; and their hope that God in his wise providence will open to him another field suitable for his gifts and acquirements.

Moderator addressed the Professor

In accordance with this resolution, the Moderator, in warm terms, conveyed to Prof. Taylor the high sense which the Synod entertained of his past services, their regret at being now under

the necessity of accepting his resignation, and their earnest wish and prayer for his usefulness and welfare in the future.

The Professor replied.

Instruction to Clerk.

The Clerk was instructed to furnish Prof. Taylor with an extract from the minutes, recording the action of Synod in reference to the acceptance of his resignation of the Professorship of Divinity.

Question of appointing another Professor.

Entered upon the consideration of the expediency of proceeding to the appointment of a Professor of Divinity; whereupon, on motion made and seconded, the Synod resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, the Rev. Mr. Dick being called to the chair.

Synod resumed.

The committee having proceeded for some time, on motion rose. The Moderator took the chair, and the Synod resumed.

Report of committe of whole.

The chairman of the committee of the whole house reported a motion submitted for deliberation, but on which the committee had not come to any decision, and at the same time asked leave to sit again.

The Presbytery of Toronto asked and obtained leave to meet here at half-past 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

The Synod adjourned, to meet again at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Closed with the benediction.

II.—SEDERUNT.

TORONTO, *Wednesday, April* 10, 1861.

9 o'clock, A.M.

The Synod met, and was constituted by the Rev. Alexander A. Drummond, Moderator.

The roll was called and marked. Sederunt as last night, with the addition of the Rev. Mr. Fayette, and with the exception of Mr. James Young, Elder.

The minutes of the first Sederunt were read and sustained.

Overture of Presbytery of Grey.

On motion made and seconded, read an overture from the Presbytery of Grey, in relation to the resignation of Prof. Taylor, requesting that the Synod delay, at present, proceeding with the election of a Professor of Divinity, to fill the vacancy in the Theological chair; and also requesting that on account of the season of the year, the members of the Presbytery be excused for absenting themselves from the meeting of Synod.

Overture laid on table.

The Moderator inquired if there was any person present on behalf of the Presbytery of Grey, to support the overture; and no one appearing, it was ordered to be laid on the table.

Committee of the whole.

The Synod resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, on the motion submitted last night, in reference to the expediency of appointing a Professor of Divinity; the Rev. Mr. Dick in the chair.

Synod resumed.

After sitting some time, the committee rose. The Moderator took the chair, and the Synod resumed.

Report.

The chairman of the committee of the whole reported the following business as transacted:

Motion.

I. Moved by Mr. William Inglis, seconded by Dr. Ormiston, That, considering that the union of this Church with the Presby-

terian Church of Canada is about to be consummated, and that the number of Professors in the sister Church is already more than sufficient for all the wants of a Theological Institute, in the present circumstances of the country, and in view of the prospective position of the United Church in this Province, the Synod do not think it at present desirable to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of their late respected Professor.

Amendment

2. Moved, in amendment, by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Caven, That this Synod, in view of union with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, deem it due to themselves to elect one of their number as a Theological Tutor, to enter on the duties of said office, not immediately, but at such time, and at such salary, as the resources and arrangements of the United Synod shall warrant.

A vote was first taken on the amendment of Mr. Kennedy, which was lost. The motion of Mr. Inglis was then carried by a large majority.

Report adopted.

On motion made and seconded, the Synod received and adopted the report of the committee of the whole house, and decided in terms of the motion. The committee was then discharged.

Dissent.

The Rev. Dr. Thornton asked and obtained leave to dissent from the decision arrived at, for reasons stated. The dissent and reasons were in terms following:

I dissent from this decision of Synod for the following reasons:

1st. Because I consider it but due to this Synod to enter upon the union upon fair and equal principles, which, without a Professor, we will not do.

2nd. Because it was expressly stipulated that our Professor should take his position in Knox's College; and this arrangement was held by our people of such vital importance, in agreeing to the union, that this Synod is not warranted in taking it for granted that they will sustain us in going forward to union without a Professor.

Dissents.

The Rev. Messrs. Proudfoot, Caven, Kennedy, Dunbar, Barr and Hall, also requested and obtained leave to enter their dissent.

Letter to U. P. Synod.

On motion of Dr. Ormiston, the Moderator and Clerk were appointed to communicate, in the name and on behalf of this Synod, with the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, informing them of the past and prospective action of this Synod, in reference to the union of this Church with the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Order to pay Professor's salary.

On motion made and seconded, it was ordered, That the Synod's Treasurer do, from any funds in his hands, forthwith pay all arrears of salary now due to Prof. Taylor.

The Rev. Dr. Ormiston, by request, led in prayer, and the Moderator closed the Session by pronouncing the apostolic benediction.

A. A. DRUMMOND, *Moderator.*

WILLIAM FRASER, *Clerk.*

APPENDIX.

LETTER TO THE SYNOD OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

TORONTO, April 10, 1861.

To the Moderator and other Members of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—The undersigned were appointed, at a *pro re nata* meeting of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada, assembled here this day, to communicate with you on a matter to us of great importance, and to you, we feel confident, not uninteresting, as involving our prospective ecclesiastical relations. Considering the origin of our branch of the Presbyterian Church in this country, and looking back at the long years through which our efforts for the diffusion of Gospel truth in this land have been so patiently, consistently and liberally sustained by you, our parent Church, it cannot be regarded as otherwise than dutiful and courteous, that, when a step on our part is contemplated, having a view to a change in the position and relations which we have hitherto sustained, you should be informed of its nature and objects; and we would be glad to entertain the hope, that we have entered upon a course which will meet with your ready and cordial approbation.

It is not unknown to you that, for many years, negotiations have been conducted between the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (commonly called the Free Church), having for their object the ecclesiastical incorporation of these two Bodies. Holding in common the same standards of doctrine and discipline, and separated only by some views on which members of the United Presbyterian Church were of opinion that differences of sentiment might, to some extent, exist, without any hinderance to Christian unity, it was, at a very early period of the organization of the two Churches in this country, regarded as highly desirable that such an understanding should be arrived at as might, without any compromise of principle, open up the way for an intelligent, cordial and scriptural union. It was felt by the great majority of the minis-

ters and members of both Churches, that could such a consummation be attained, it would have the best effects in greatly strengthening the cause of Presbyterianism, enlarging its sphere of usefulness, and advancing the kingdom of Christ. The desire thus largely entertained from the commencement, gained strength, and became more and more practically operative, as the negotiations proceeded, and as our acquaintance with each other became more extended and intimate. Those negotiations were brought to a successful and happy close at the *interim* meetings of the two Synods, in Toronto, in October last, when such conclusions were arrived at, on both sides, as were mutually satisfactory; and the results of the long and anxious, and, we trust, prayerful deliberations, which had been conducted, were embodied in a Basis of Union, in which the two Synods concurred, and on which they agreed to unite and become one Church. It was also agreed that the union should be consummated at the meetings of the Synods to be held in the city of Montreal on the first Tuesday of June next.

We subjoin for your information a copy of the Basis:

BASIS OF UNION.

The Presbyterian Church of Canada, and the United Presbyterian Church in Canada, believing that it would be for the glory of God, and for the advancement of the Cause of Christ in the land, that they should be united, and form one Church, do hereby agree to unite on the following Basis, to be subscribed by the Moderators of the respective Synods, in their name and behalf; declaring, at the same time, that no inference from the fourth article of said Basis is held to be legitimate, which asserts that the civil magistrate has the right to prescribe the faith of the Church, or to interfere with the freedom of her ecclesiastical action; further, that unanimity of sentiment not required in regard to the practical applications of the principle embodied in the said fourth article; and that, whatever differences of sentiment may arise on these subjects, all action in reference thereto shall be regulated by, and be subject to, the recognized principles of Presbyterian Church order:

I. Of Holy Scripture.—That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being the inspired Word of God, are the supreme and infallible rule of faith and life.

II. Of the Subordinate Standards.—That the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, are received by this Church as her Subordinate Standards.

But whereas certain sections of the said Confession of Faith, which treat of the power or duty of the civil magistrate, have been objected to as teaching principles adverse both to the right of private judgment in religious matters, and to the prerogatives which Christ has vested in his Church, it is to be understood:

1. That no interpretation or reception of these sections is held by this Church, which would interfere with the fullest forbearance as to any difference of opinion which may prevail on the question of the endowment of the Church by the State.

2. That no interpretation or reception of these sections is required by this Church which would accord to the State any authority to violate that liberty of conscience and right of judgment which are asserted in chap. 20, sec. 2, of the Confession; and in accordance with the statement of which, this Church holds that every person ought to be at full liberty to search the Scriptures for himself, and to follow out what he conscientiously believes to be the teaching of Scripture, without let or hinderance: provided that no one is to be allowed, under the pretext of following the dictates of conscience, to interfere with the peace and good order of society.

3. That no interpretation or reception of these sections is required by this Church, which would admit of any interference on the part of the State with the spiritual independence of the Church, as set forth in chap. 30 of the Confession.

III. Of the Headship of Christ over the Church.—That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of His Church; that He has made her free from all external or secular authority, in the administration of her affairs, and that she is bound to assert and defend this liberty to the utmost, and ought not to enter into such engagements with any party as would be prejudicial thereto.

IV. Of the Headship of Christ over the Nations, and the Duty of the Civil Magistrate.—The Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, is invested with universal sovereignty, and is therefore King of Nations; and that all men, in every capacity and relation, are bound to obey His will, as revealed in His Word; and particularly that the Civil Magistrate (including under that term all who are in any way concerned in the legislative or administrative action of the State) is bound to regulate his official procedure, as well as his personal conduct, by the revealed will of Christ.

V. Of Church Government.—That the system of polity established in the Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government, in so far as it declares a plurality of Elders for each congregation, the official equality of Presbyters, without any officers in the Church superior to the said Presbyters, and the unity of the Church, in a due subordination of a smaller part to a larger, and of a larger to the whole, is the government of this Church, and is, in the features of it herein set forth, believed by this Church to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God.

VI. Of Worship.—That the ordinances of Worship shall be administered in this Church, as they have heretofore been, by the respective Bodies of which it is composed, in a general accordance with the directions contained in the Westminster Directory of Worship.

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VI. Of Worship.—That the ordinances of Worship shall be administered in this Church, as they have heretofore been, by the respective Bodies of which it is composed, in a general accordance with the directions contained in the Westminster Directory of Worship.

And now, Fathers and Brethren, we have only to hope that our procedure in the premises will not be unacceptable to the Church of our fathers and of our affections, and that you will give us credit for sincerity of purpose and faithfulness to great principles. We trust too that the intercourse which has been so long and so cordially maintained will not, by the contemplated step, be interrupted, as we are sure that it cannot tend in any degree to lessen the love with which we must ever regard our parent Church. Having the same great objects in view—the salvation of men and the glory of Christ—though standing, after the union, in a somewhat different relation to that which we had previously occupied, we wish still to preserve uninjured the same bonds of brotherhood; and we are certain that we do not assume too much, when we anticipate that you will heartily reciprocate those feelings of fraternal and Christian regard.

We hail as one of the most promising characteristics of the Christian world, in the age in which we live, the wide-spread and growing desire on the part of different sections of the Christian Church, to remove the walls of separation which stood between them, and to smooth down the asperities which too long kept apart the friends of Christ. We were greatly pleased to learn that on the very day on which we here in Canada had come to terms of union, in our sister Province of Nova Scotia the branch of the Church there, sprung from the two elder members of the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church in that colony, had completed their work in that direction, and had consummated a cordial and *unanimous* union, not a single minister or congregation being left behind; and we fondly anticipate that the same very gratifying result may be realized in our own experience when we meet in the city of Montreal, in June next. We do not forget, too, that the union of the two elder branches of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, forty years ago, was anticipated, by about four years, by a similar union in the Province which we have already named. May we not hope that, in the wise orderings of Divine Providence, and in the spirit of the intercessary prayer of our Lord Jesus, the example set in the colonies may exert its influence on the Presbyterian family at large in the fatherland; that we may yet see its larger divisions there, drawn towards each other as with one heart and one soul, gathered into the same fold, and that the only strife which shall thenceforth exist shall be that so strongly urged by the Apostle, "Striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

We need scarcely inform you that the progress of your Missions at home, and especially among the heathen, has always been to us a subject of great interest. The Christian can never look with indifference on the condition of those lands where the people are sitting in darkness and in the region and

shadow of death; and the efforts which the United Presbyterian Church has put forth in different parts of the world, for the removal of this darkness, and the measure of success which has been vouchsafed by the Head of the Church, afford matter for congratulation and thankfulness. We anticipate, in view of the union into which we are about to enter, that the hands of the United Church shall be so greatly strengthened, that she shall be enabled, in some good measure, to take her place beside the greater and stronger organizations of older Churches, in bearing forward the banner of the Cross, and in assailing the strongholds of superstition and idolatry in their chosen habitations; that she will be, if possible more than ever before, valiant for the truth, and with renewed diligence and zeal enter upon her appropriate work in spreading abroad in this and other lands the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

And now, in conclusion, Fathers and Brethren, neither forgetting nor forsaking you, but ever willing to cherish the most endearing memories, we bid you, for the present, affectionately, farewell. May the angel which appeared to Moses in the bush, and who was with the Church in the wilderness, be with you. May your Church everywhere have rest, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied. May peace be within the walls of your Zion, and prosperity within her palaces. And may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

In the name and on behalf of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Canada.

(Signed) A. A. DRUMMOND, *Moderator.*
WILLIAM FRASER, *Clerk.*

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